

WASHINGTON – The House of Representatives today passed legislation that will fix a 2005 law that left Arizona off an important list of states authorized to receive a higher federal “share” for certain federally funded highway projects.

H.R. 1195, which was passed by a 358 to 51 vote, contains a change sought by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell to allow Arizona to receive a higher federal share for certain highway projects to which it should have originally been entitled. Mitchell, who serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has worked to secure the fix since last March.

“It’s a matter of basic fairness,” said Mitchell. “States with large amounts of public lands are supposed to receive a higher federal share for federally funded highway projects. That wasn’t happening in Arizona, and I’m glad that we’ve been able to fix it.”

Arizona Left Out of Key Provision of 2005 Highway Bill

In 2005, when the previous Congress passed the last highway bill, it allowed only six states – Alaska, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon and South Dakota – to receive a higher federal share for certain federally funded highway projects. Arizona was left off of the list, despite the fact that it ranks third in the nation in public lands. The higher federal share is supposed to assist states with large amounts of public lands, which often have a harder time raising local funding for highway projects.

H.R. 1195 strikes the 2005 language, allowing Arizona and other states with large amounts of public lands, to receive the higher federal shares to which they should be entitled.

Costs for federally funded highway projects are typically shared among federal, state and local sources. Without eligibility for a higher federal share, Arizona’s cost-share tripled from 5.7 percent to 20 percent, costing state and local governments millions of dollars for projects across the state in order to be eligible for federal funding.

Mitchell Uses Seat on Transportation Committee to Gain Fix

March 2007

Mitchell offers an amendment to H.R. 1195 to add Arizona to the list of states authorized to receive a higher federal share and secures Chairman Jim Oberstar’s commitment to work with him on the federal share as H.R. 1195 goes forward. H.R. 1195 is approved by Committee on March 21, 2007 by voice vote and approved by the House on March 26, 2007 by voice vote.

July 2007

Mitchell is appointed to House-Senate Conference Committee which considers H.R. 1195. Conference agrees to change H.R. 1195 to address Mitchell’s concerns, and allow Arizona to receive a higher federal share.

March 2008

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approves modified version of H.R. 1195, including Rep. Mitchell’s change, on March 7.

Mitchell Secures Victory for Arizona Highways Projects

Monday, 28 April 2008

April 2008

Senate approves modified version of H.R. 1195, including Mitchell's change, by a vote of 88 to 2 on April 17.

House approves modified version of H.R. 1195, including Mitchell's change by a vote of 358 to 51 on April 30.

Mitchell is the first Arizonan to serve on the House Transportation Committee in a decade.